



Farm Labor News Release

In Cooperation with the Georgia Department of Agriculture

Georgia Field Office • 355 East Hancock Avenue, Suite 320 • Athens, GA 30601 • (706) 546-2236

www.nass.usda.gov

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Media Contact: Douglas G. Kleweno

nass-ga@nass.usda.gov

HIRED WORKERS DOWN 1 PERCENT, WAGE RATES UP 2 PERCENT FROM A YEAR AGO

There were 1,244,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 11-17, 2010, down 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 894,000 were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 350,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$10.82 per hour during the July 2010 reference week, up 16 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$10.12 per hour, up 8 cents from last July, while livestock workers earned \$10.19 per hour compared with \$10.05 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$10.14 per hour, was up 10 cents from last year. The number of hours worked averaged 41.0 for hired workers during the survey week, up 3 percent from a year ago.

The largest decreases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), and Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia) regions. In the Lake, Corn Belt I, and Appalachian II regions, weather conditions were wetter than last year's reference week. Fieldwork progress was slowed for nearly two days in some areas, lowering the demand for hired workers. Heavy rains and flooding occurred in parts of Texas, halting most field activities and reducing the need for hired workers in the Southern Plains region. In the Delta region, declining demand from the nursery and greenhouse industries kept hired worker numbers below last year.

The largest increases in the number of hired workers from last year occurred in California, and in the Northern Plains (Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah) regions. Above normal winter precipitation in California allowed more acreage to be cropped due to increased availability of irrigation water. Therefore, more hired workers were needed. In the Northern Plains and Mountain II regions, weather conditions were drier than last year's reference week. This allowed field activities to progress rapidly and increased the need for hired workers. Strong demand from the cattle and poultry industries in the Corn Belt II region pushed hired worker numbers above last year. In the Appalachian II region, increased requirements from the tobacco, vegetable, and fruit industries kept hired worker levels above the previous year.

Hired worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Northern Plains, Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania), Corn Belt I, and Southeast (Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina) regions. In the Northern Plains, Corn Belt I and Southeast regions, the higher wages were due to a lower proportion of part time workers. The higher wages in the Northeast II region were due to a larger percentage of higher paid equine workers.

WAGE RATES BY TYPE OF WORKER BY SOUTHEAST REGION AND UNITED STATES—2009 AND 2010

	July 12-18, 2009			July 11-17, 2010		
	All Hired	Field	Livestock	All Hired	Field	Livestock
	--Dollars per Hour--					
Southeast^{1/}	9.27	8.92	8.84	9.97	9.12	9.69
US^{2/}	10.66	10.04	10.05	10.82	10.12	10.19

[Results from the Agricultural Labor Survey]. 1/ Southeast: AL, GA, SC. 2/ Excludes AK.